Palle Srujana

Grassroots Innovations and the Truth of Volunteerism

A voluntary civil society organisation | Telangana and Andhra Pradesh | Established 2005

Part of the nationwide Honey Bee Network



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Understanding Palle Srujana

The Beginning

Palle Srujana emerged from the life journey of Brigadier Ganesham, its founder and president. He came from a village background, where early life remained closely connected to people and everyday realities. This grounding stayed with him as he moved into formal education and later joined the Indian Army in 1972.

Over the next three and a half decades, he served in diverse and demanding conditions. A significant phase of his service came after Kargil, when he became closely involved with innovation efforts within the Army. During this time, he and his team developed a multi weapon platform, later known as Windy. The innovation was tested across terrains, showcased during the Republic Day Parade, and led to what became the first patent associated with the Indian Army. This experience strengthened his belief that creativity did not depend on education, position, or access to resources, but emerged from necessity and experience. He later received the Vishishta Seva Medal in recognition of his service and contribution.

A turning point followed when he was recommended by Anand Mahindra to be part of the Governing Council of the National Innovation Foundation. Through this, he came in contact with Dr R A Mashelkar and Prof Anil K Gupta, and was introduced to the Honey Bee Network. Here, he encountered grassroots innovators from across the country and understood how many ideas remained unseen because they emerged from informal systems.

After retiring from the Army in October 2005, he chose to work in this space. On 20 November 2005, Palle Srujana took shape as an effort to engage with grassroots creativity. It did not begin as a structured organisation, but as a way to step into villages, listen, learn, and bring visibility to innovations that often remained unrecognised.

Palle Srujana is a voluntary civil society organisation established in 2005, based in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. It operates as part of the nationwide Honey Bee Network, advancing the mission of empowering grassroots innovators and their innovations. By bridging the gap between grassroots knowledge and formal systems, Palle Srujana facilitates value addition to grassroots innovators and their communities.

A Journey in Milestones

2005	Palle Srujana founded
2006	Palle Srujana Magazine launched. Bimonthly, volunteer driven, no advertisements
2007	Very first farmer exhibition held at Karampudi village
2009	First Presidential Award received
2009	Creative Minds registered; visiting colleges begins;
2010	Gnan Shodh initiated; Capturing Children's Creativity begins; first rural internship with students from IIT Kharagpur
2011	First Chinna Shodha Yatra
2012	Farmer and public exhibitions take serious shape with higher frequency
2016	Innovation Diffusion Centre established
2020–22	Wednesday Weekly Webinars, 100 sessions held
2022	Palle Srujana Pennidhi formally established
2025	Palle Srujana completes a journey of 20 years of nurturing grassroots creativity
2026	Bi-monthly magazine Palle Srujana completes 20 years. Physical printing stopped and only a digital version was undertaken which distributed free on the web.
2026	Physical Participation of grassroots innovators in an International Invention Expo in Thailand and won laurels.

Innovation Without a Laboratory

When the word innovation is used today, it most often points to a specific kind of place. A research laboratory, a technology park, a startup hub. It points to people with degrees, to capital, to formal systems of development and testing. This is not wrong. That form of innovation has changed the world in important ways.

But there is another kind of innovation that rarely makes headlines. It happens in fields, in small workshops, at kitchen fires, and at broken machines that someone decided to fix differently. It emerges when a person with no formal training, no funding, and no institutional support encounters a problem that is real and urgent to them. And finds a way through it.

A farmer who cannot afford to hire labour, redesigns his weeding tool. A weaver whose wrists are damaged by repetitive motion builds a machine to take the strain away. An elderly woman holds a treatment her family has used for three generations. These are not approximations of innovation. They are innovation, arising from necessity, shaped by deep contextual knowledge, and tested in real conditions over real time.

Grassroots innovations rarely enter the formal record. The people who create them are not typically invited to conferences or featured in journals. Their knowledge does not travel far unless someone makes the deliberate effort to find it, honour it, and carry it forward.

> *When ordinary people are treated as sources of wisdom rather than recipients of solutions, the relationship between knowledge and community changes entirely.*

This is precisely what Palle Srujana set out to do. And in doing so, it has encountered a consistent truth: when ordinary people are treated as sources of wisdom rather than recipients of solutions, the relationship between knowledge and community changes entirely. The flow reverses. Instead of expertise moving from institution to village, it begins to move between villages, horizontally, peer to peer, in the same language, between people who share the same soil and the same seasons.

This document is an account of what that reversal looks like in practice.

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A Movement Driven by Volunteers

Palle Srujana is entirely driven by volunteerism without any formal organisational structure, hierarchy, or employees. It engages with a wide array of volunteers and stakeholders such as students, elders, women, public and private institutions, NGOs, and government entities, bringing them together through a shared spirit of participation.

It focuses on disseminating rural creativity and knowledge horizontally, from village to village and region to region. Volunteers also nurture children's creativity through interactions in schools, especially in rural areas. These efforts ensure that grassroots creativity/innovations reach wider audiences.

Understanding Volunteerism

Volunteerism is about doing something unasked for, without expectations, and with the belief that the effort will benefit someone. At Palle Srujana, it is understood as an approach that places the focus entirely on the beneficiaries.

> *Volunteerism is doing something unasked for, without expectations, in the belief that it will benefit someone.*

Rather than following fixed definitions, it remains an evolving process guided by inner motivation and the desire to create value. Volunteers complete tasks with a sense of contentment, and many return to contribute again.

> *Volunteers complete tasks with a sense of contentment, and many return to contribute again.*

Unlike conventional systems with defined roles and processes, volunteerism at Palle Srujana operates in a space of openness. Volunteers often begin with little knowledge about grassroots innovations or the tasks they take up. This lack of familiarity encourages curiosity. Without rigid expectations, qualities like commitment, attention, and care emerge naturally. Volunteers choose what they wish to do and step back when they do not find meaning in a task. Many bear their own travel and logistical expenses, reflecting the self driven nature of their involvement. Despite the absence of formal accountability, most strive to contribute meaningfully. This balance of freedom and responsibility allows the work to sustain itself.

Impact that Emerges Naturally

When discussing impact, there is often a tendency to rely on predefined targets, resources, and structured workflows. Palle Srujana follows a different path. Its work does not begin with fixed outcomes. Volunteerism unfolds organically, and impact emerges through continuous effort. The results are not strategically designed but grow naturally through participation. The relation with innovation may go on for many years. Over time, this process reveals the potential of volunteer driven work.

> *Impact is not strategically designed. It grows naturally, through participation.*

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The Initiatives

Over nearly two decades, Palle Srujana's work has taken shape through a range of initiatives. None of them were designed in advance. Each one emerged from a gap that became visible only through practice.

The magazine came first, because there was no way to share what had been found. Walking yatras came because reading about villages was not the same as entering them on foot. Exhibitions emerged because farmers needed to see and touch innovations, not just hear about them. It was also an opportunity to showcase grassroots creativity to the formal system. The fund for innovators took shape because good ideas were stalling for want of a few thousand rupees that no institution would provide. Internships began because students needed to unlearn things that formal education had calcified in them. The diffusion centre opened because there was finally a physical space where people could feel grassroots creativity with their own hands.

Each activity called the next into being. Together they form something that might be called an ecosystem, not designed as one, but evolved and functioning as one. Scouting feeds the magazine. The magazine reaches farmers. Exhibitions take innovations to where farmers gather. The fund supports the innovators that exhibitions surface. Internships bring students into the same current. The yatra runs through all of it, reminding everyone involved of why the work exists.

What also shaped each initiative was the involvement of volunteers at every stage. It has been the result of the combined efforts of volunteers, their commitment and expertise. Volunteers did not simply execute what the organisation designed. They noticed gaps, proposed responses, and took ownership of activities that would not have existed otherwise. The initiatives are, in this sense, a record of what voluntary attention, sustained over time, is capable of building.

Palle Srujana Magazine: Where Knowledge Travels

A bimonthly Telugu publication documenting grassroots knowledge, driven entirely by volunteer effort since 2006

At a Glance

▸ 100th edition reached in 2024, entirely volunteer written, subscriber funded, with no advertisements or sponsors	▸ 19+ years of uninterrupted publication in Telugu, reaching mandal offices, district libraries, collectors, NGOs, and villages across two states
▸ Gave grassroots innovators a new social standing, from unknown practitioners to recognised innovators in their communities, based on their contribution to society.	▸ Sparked national level recognition for innovators featured in its pages, including Presidential Awards and Padma awards.

The journey of Palle Srujana Magazine began in November 2006 with a simple yet powerful intention: to document and share rural knowledge across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. A need was felt to disseminate the grassroots knowledge scouted and documented so that it could reach the Telugu people periodically. A group of three

volunteers formed the Editorial Board with no past experience of publication or journalism. There was no question of how, only why not.

What started as a modest effort to record grassroots innovations gradually grew into something much larger. It was not designed as a large publication from the outset, but evolved over time through consistent effort and shared belief. At its core was the idea that knowledge present in villages must travel beyond its immediate context and reach others who may benefit from it.

This knowledge was not gathered from a single source. It emerged through field visits, Chinna Shodha Yatras, and conversations that spread through word of mouth, where innovators themselves connected others to similar efforts. Over time, volunteers also began to identify innovations by reading district local and regional editions of Telugu newspapers - a virtual scouting.. Small mentions in local reports often became starting points. With only a name and a village as clues, volunteers would travel, meet the individual, and spend time understanding their work in detail.

As the magazine began to take shape, it slowly transformed from a small initiative into a sustained movement. What enabled this growth was not infrastructure or institutional backing, but the steady and often unseen contributions of volunteers. Their involvement was neither structured nor assigned. Yet, their commitment played a defining role. Over time, what began as a quarterly effort grew into a bimonthly publication, eventually reaching a significant milestone with its 100th edition.

The Work Behind the Pages

The making of the magazine has always been a collective effort, shaped almost entirely by volunteerism. Each story begins with a conversation. Interactions with innovators and knowledge holders are recorded with their consent and later carefully written into narratives. From the very first issue to the hundredth, every story has been written by Palle Raghava Reddy, a volunteer who also runs a printing press. Coming from a farming background, he is able to engage in conversations with ease and present them in a language that resonates with rural readers.

Once written, the stories are reviewed and refined by other volunteers who contribute through proofreading and editorial support. The process moves through several stages, from interaction to narration to review to finalisation to printing to distribution, all done by volunteers. All of this happens without advertisements, without sponsors, and without deviation from the magazine's purpose. The focus remains on documenting and sharing rural creativity and knowledge. The only cost involved is printing, which is supported through subscriptions.

Reaching People, Connecting Communities

The magazine is published in Telugu, keeping its primary audience in mind. It is meant for people living in villages, and the language ensures that the knowledge remains accessible and meaningful. Copies are sent by post to subscribers and distributed during Chinna Shodha Yatras, exhibitions, and similar gatherings. Magazines are provided free to innovators, reputed NGOs, and government departments, some schools and public libraries at district level..

In the early years, Brigadier Ganesham took the initiative to send the very first issue to a wide range of organisations. Without a predefined list, he gathered addresses of NGOs he was aware of and others he identified, and sent copies to all of them. For the first few years, copies were sent free of cost to secretaries, collectors, and mandal offices across the state, covering nearly 1500 mandal headquarters. The focus was not on subscription or cost, but on ensuring that the magazine reached people.

In 2009, during a conversation with the Planning Secretary of the then undivided Andhra Pradesh, the cost of the magazine was determined for the first time, at Rs 25 per issue. The Planning Department subscribed for around 1200 mandals, allowing it to reach a wide network of villages. Over time, some of those readers chose to continue the subscription on their own.

In one instance, a couple, Dr Sudha and Dr Nageshwar Rao from Krishna district, chose to support the magazine by subscribing to all villages in the district for one year. This resulted in 942 subscriptions. After that year, some of the villages continued independently. People living outside their native places often subscribe on behalf of their own or nearby villages. Educational institutions too contribute in this way.

Recognising the Innovator Within

One of the most meaningful contributions of the magazine has been the way it reshaped how innovators were seen within their own communities. When farmers, mechanics, and other grassroots practitioners are featured, they are recognised as innovators. A new pedestal has been created in the village social hierarchy, one that is rooted in knowledge and contribution to society. For instance, when Syed Subhani's work on a tractor attached boom sprayer was featured on the cover page, people in his village began to approach him differently. They showed interest in his work, sought to understand his ideas, and invited him to speak in local schools and colleges. Respect grew, and his work reached a wider audience. This repeated in almost all innovators featured in the magazine.

Over time, the term grassroots innovator has become more widely understood among Telugu speaking rural communities. It has offered a new way of seeing and valuing everyday problem solving. Local schools and District Magistrates began inviting them on Independence Day and Republic Day as guests. This respect was further enhanced when innovators received awards and recognition at national and state level.

A Milestone and What It Represents

The 100th edition of the magazine marks an important moment in its journey. More than a numerical milestone, it represents years of collective effort, sustained commitment, and the coming together of individuals who believed in a common purpose. It reflects the strength of an initiative built entirely on volunteerism, where each contribution, however small, played a role in shaping the whole.

> *Palle Srujana magazine is setting a new standard in journalism by showcasing the behind the screen creativity of villagers, in keeping with the elders' belief that rural areas are the backbone for the country's progress. Through its magazine, Palle Srujana is bringing the educational, medical and scientific matters of everyday life which even established media is not aware of, with unique solutions that even common readers can understand and relate.*

— Mullapudi Harishchandra Prasad, then Chairman and Managing Director, Andhra Sugars Ltd. 2007

These words came when the magazine was still finding its place. They captured its intent with clarity, and they continue to hold.

The Postman Who Read It First

Rama Sheshayya had retired from the postal service but could not bring himself to stay home. His father, a teacher, had left him with one conviction that outlasted everything else: a person should never be idle. There should always be something good being done. So each morning, Sheshayya made his way back to the post office in Chirala, not because he was required to, but because he did not know how to stop being useful.

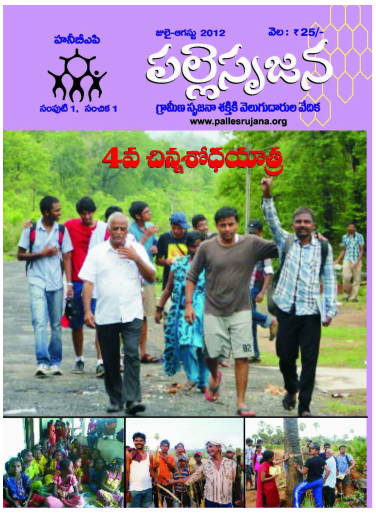
One day, a copy of the Palle Srujana magazine arrived at the post office with an incomplete address. The postman on duty could not locate the subscriber and set it aside. Sheshayya noticed it. The book looked interesting, so he opened it. He read it page by page. The writing was clear. The stories were about people who had solved their own problems in ways no textbook would describe. He had never come across a publication quite like it.

He put it down and thought about the subscriber. Someone who had sought out this particular magazine, he reasoned, must be a person of a certain quality. The copy had to reach them. He called the number printed in the magazine, reached Palle Srujana, explained what had happened, obtained the subscriber’s contact, and personally made sure the magazine was delivered. He then wrote a letter to Brigadier Ganesham to say what he had done, and that doing it had given him genuine satisfaction.

Brigadier Ganesham wrote back. He told Sheshayya that people like him, people with that particular quality of attentiveness and care, were the reason the work of Palle Srujana felt worthwhile. That because of what Sheshayya had done, the magazine had reached where it was supposed to reach. He thanked him, and said that it was the cooperation of people like him that made it possible to continue doing good work.

No one had asked Sheshayya to read the magazine. No one had asked him to track down the subscriber. He had simply encountered something worth caring about, and acted on it. This is perhaps the most honest description of how the magazine has always travelled, not only through postal routes and subscription lists, but through the quiet decisions of individuals who, without instruction or incentive, chose to make sure it found its way.











Chinna Shodha Yatra: Walking in Search of Knowledge

A three day walking journey through villages, in search of grassroots knowledge, creativity, and human connection

At a Glance

▸ 56 CSYs completed. Nearly 1,500 people walked 3,000+ km through close to 1,000 villages across Telangana and Andhra Pradesh	▸ Dissolves social hierarchies naturally. Students, scientists, farmers, and professionals walk the same path, eat the same food, share the same spaces
▸ A proven method for discovering grassroots innovators. Villagers encounter peer creativity and step forward with their own	▸ Transforms participants durably. Many return as more empathetic individuals, carrying changed perspectives into institutions and families

Among the many activities undertaken by Palle Srujana volunteers, the Chinna Shodha Yatra stands out as one of the most experiential and transformative. More than just an activity, the yatra has become a space where volunteerism comes alive. It is during these journeys that many participants first encounter the philosophy of the movement, not through explanations, but through lived experience.

The idea of Shodha Yatra was originally initiated by Professor Anil K Gupta, founder of the Honey Bee Network. The purpose was simple yet profound: to walk through villages in search of grassroots knowledge, creativity, and innovations. The underlying belief was that the hardships and challenges faced by rural communities often become powerful motivators for creativity and problem solving. Inspired by this idea, volunteers at Palle Srujana began organising Chinna Shodha Yatra, chinna meaning small in size in Telugu.

While the original Shodh Yatra spans several days and over a hundred kilometres, the CSY was designed as a three day journey covering about fifty kilometres, making it accessible to working professionals, students, and volunteers who wished to participate without taking long breaks from their daily responsibilities. Since the first CSY in 2011, volunteers have walked through dozens of regions across Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, interacting with villagers, farmers, artisans, elders, and children.



Beginning with Unlearning

Each CSY begins with an orientation session led by Brigadier Ganesham. Participants are encouraged to make themselves zero and relearn. The intention is simple: shed preconceived notions about villages, knowledge, and development. Only when the mind is free from assumptions can it truly observe and learn.



Walking becomes the central method of learning. Brigadier Ganesham often explains the importance of walking through an acronym: Witness, meaning to be present and observe; Accept, to embrace the different and the unknown; Listen to Learn, not to respond but to absorb; and Knowledge, allowing each step to teach something new. Walking slows the mind down. It allows people to notice things they might otherwise overlook, the structure of houses, the plants growing along the path, animal shelters, village markets, workshops, arts and crafts, and the rhythm of village life.



Learning from Four Gurus

During the yatra, participants are reminded that their teachers are not limited to books or formal institutions. Nature becomes the first teacher. As the yatries walk through fields, forests, and villages, they observe how people live in harmony with their environment. They notice local plants, traditional agricultural practices, and ways in which communities adapt to changing seasons.

The second guru is the villagers. Participants interact with farmers, artisans, elders, and women, learning about their practices, traditions, food habits, and healthcare knowledge. Conversations with elderly villagers often reveal stories and practices that are slowly disappearing. There is a saying often quoted during the yatra: when an old person dies, a library burns down. By listening carefully, the yatries attempt to preserve fragments of that living library.

The third guru is co yatries. Participants come from diverse backgrounds, students, scientists, media, farmers, corporate employees, artists, and professionals. During the three days of walking and frugal living, these distinctions dissolve. Everyone walks the same path, eats the same food, and sleeps in the same shared spaces. Equity is practiced as default. Nowhere in our normal lives is such equity experienced.

The fourth guru is perhaps the most powerful: oneself. Walking nearly fifty kilometres in three days pushes participants beyond their usual comfort zones. Away from screens, schedules, and the fast pace of urban life, many begin to reflect deeply on their own perspectives and priorities. Self introspection in an unknown space, unobserved and

uninfluenced by the surroundings, is undertaken by the yatris. Everyone is around, yet one enjoys the solitude. The yatra becomes a mirror through which participants rediscover themselves.

A Space for Dialogue and Discovery

Throughout the journey, volunteers share stories of grassroots innovators scouted through the Honey Bee Network and Palle Srujana. Innovations are displayed in the villages using posters, demonstrations, and short videos. These often spark conversations among villagers themselves. Many times, villagers step forward to share their own ideas or refer to someone in a nearby village who has created something useful. In this way, the yatra becomes a horizontal platform for knowledge exchange, where learning flows freely between villagers and participants.

Grassroots innovators sometimes join the yatra during the walk. When they share their stories directly with participants, the excitement among yatries is palpable. For many, meeting these innovators feels like meeting a hero whose work has quietly improved lives.





Honouring Forgotten Knowledge

One of the most touching moments during the yatra is the felicitation of elders. After interacting with elderly villagers (above 90 years) and learning from their experiences, volunteers honour them with a shawl as a small token of appreciation and seek their blessings. Often the elders express surprise and gratitude, as their knowledge has rarely been formally recognised. For the volunteers, these moments reaffirm the belief that wisdom does not always reside in formal institutions. It often lives quietly in villages.





Eeswaramma and the Shawl

One such moment, which stayed with the team long after the journey ended, occurred during the 19th Chinna Shodha Yatra, held from June 24 to 26, 2016, in Kadapa district. The yatra passed between V.N. Reddy Palle and Gangareddi Palle villages. In Busireddi Palle, the team met an elderly woman named Eeswaramma. Moved by the depth of her knowledge, the yatris honoured her with a shawl as a mark of gratitude. What they did not know at that moment was how deeply this small gesture had touched her.

After the yatra, Eeswaramma would often speak to others in the village about the recognition she had received. She would show the shawl with quiet pride, sharing how Palle Srujana had seen and valued her knowledge. It is said that she kept the shawl under her pillow and slept with it every day. A recognition that had never come her way before had, in her final years, given her a sense of being seen.

When her health declined and she was nearing the end of her life, she told her family members, more than once, not to use any other cloth for her final rites. She wished to be laid to rest in the shawl given to her by Palle Srujana. Her family honoured her wish. The villagers, remembering her words, reflected on how profoundly a single moment of recognition had marked her life.

For the team, this became a moment of deep reflection. What had seemed like a small act had left an indelible mark on someone's life. It was a reminder that genuine recognition, extended without expectation, carries a weight that no one fully anticipates. With this understanding, and with gratitude for the warmth shown by the villagers, Palle Srujana carried forward its commitment to honouring the knowledge that lives quietly in villages.





Pichhaiah and the Plastic Bottle

The yatra is also a space for scouting. As volunteers walk through villages and share innovations with gathered crowds, they always ask at the end: does anyone here have something of their own? Most of the time, there is silence. People are not used to being asked. They do not think of what they have made as something worth mentioning.













During a Chinna Shodha Yatra in Mahabubabad district of Telangana, the same question was put to the villagers gathered around. Silence. Volunteers waited. Five minutes passed. Then ten. Then twenty. The volunteers did not move on. They stayed with the question.

Eventually, a man stepped forward from the edge of the crowd. Quietly, almost reluctantly. His name was Pichhaiah. He was not someone the village had noticed before. He said, shyly, that he had something. The volunteers asked him to show it. He said his farm was four kilometres away and he would need time to bring it. They told him they would wait.

Half an hour later, Pichhaiah returned. He was carrying something made from a plastic bottle, a pipe, and a stick. A simple thing to look at. He explained what it did. It was a device for dispensing fertilizer to his crops, designed to deliver the right amount at the right location, dropping it precisely where it was needed rather than spreading it loosely over the soil. He had worked out that it saved roughly thirty-five percent of fertilizer.

The villagers standing around him were surprised. They had lived beside him for years and had no idea he had built this. Pichhaiah had not thought to tell them. He had made it for himself, quietly, because the problem was real and the materials were at hand.

This is what the yatra makes possible. Not just the discovery of the innovation, but the moment when the innovator is seen, by the volunteers, by the village, and perhaps for the first time, by himself. Documentation followed. And Pichhaiah, who had come forward shyly from the edge of a crowd, became part of the Palle Srujana family.



Capturing Children's Curiosity

Another meaningful activity during the yatra is engaging with school children. These interactions introduce them to grassroots innovations as well as ideas developed by other children, and create a space to explore their own creativity. After a conversation around everyday problems and possible solutions, supported by videos or simple demonstrations, children are encouraged to write about the issues/pains they observe around them. They are also invited to share any ideas they may have to address these problems.







In one instance during a Chinna Shodha Yatra, a child wrote about child marriage, expressing her disappointment with the practice. In another, a child imagined a world where plants change colours when watered with different colours. On a different occasion, a child wondered if buildings could be constructed without demolition by lifting and building the new below it or relocating existing structures. For many yatris, these interactions become one of the most cherished parts of the journey.

The Silent Walk

Another unique aspect of the CSY is the silent walk. For about twenty minutes during the night, participants walk together in complete silence. No conversation, no whispering, no lights, only the sound of footsteps and the surrounding night. It is an unknown path, in an unknown context, among unknown people, in nature's lap. After the walk ends, participants gather to share their experiences. Many describe it as the moment when they connect most deeply with the fourth guru, themselves.

The Impact of Chinna Shodha Yatra on Society

Since 2011, more than fifty CSYs have been organised across different regions. Close to a thousand people may have walked them. No one has attempted to measure exactly how these journeys have changed their lives. Yet through continued interactions with former yatris, one thing becomes clear: the experience leaves a lasting imprint.

What the yatra does quietly and without announcement is difficult to name. Titles and roles do not disappear through any deliberate exercise. They simply become irrelevant when everyone is walking the same path, eating the same food, and sleeping in the same shared space for three days. A scientist and a farmer, a student and a retired officer, a journalist and a weaver, an army veteran and a retired woman principal - they meet each other as people, and something in that meeting tends to stay.

Former yatris often describe a shift in how they make decisions. Not dramatically, but steadily. They find themselves pausing before assuming. They begin to ask what they do not know before acting on what they think they do. When this happens in the lives of people who work in institutions, in classrooms, in government offices, in companies, the ripple is real even if it is invisible.

The yatra has also opened doors that would otherwise have stayed closed. When villagers see innovations being shared by people who come from backgrounds like their own, something shifts. They begin to speak. What was private knowledge, a tool quietly used for years, a solution that seemed too ordinary to mention, becomes worth sharing. Innovators have been discovered this way. So have traditional practices that no one had thought to ask about.

Perhaps what the yatra changes most is not what participants know but how they see. Many arrive carrying assumptions about villages, about what they lack, about what they

need. By the third day, that framing tends to quietly collapse. Villages reveal themselves as places that have been solving their own problems for generations. When we begin to see villagers as providers rather than recipients, the nature of every conversation that follows changes.







When we see villagers as providers, everything changes.

Palle Srujana Pennidhi: A Treasure Built on Trust

A volunteer led fund that supports grassroots innovators at critical stages, built entirely on trust and individual goodwill

At a Glance

- Rs 90 lakh+ extended to 25+ innovators, almost 90% repaid, without written agreements or formal monitoring
- Supported innovators whom formal banking systems had already turned away, and those innovators honoured every commitment
- Operates on individual trust, not institutional process. Contributors choose freely, support goes directly, and responsibility is mutual
- Demonstrates that creditworthiness is not a function of collateral, but of character and context

The word Pennidhi means God's treasure. True to its name, Palle Srujana Pennidhi (PSP) is not seen merely as a pool of funds, but as something sacred, built on trust, goodwill, and the collective spirit of giving. It reflects a simple belief that when people come together with sincerity, what is needed finds its way.

The Need

Through continuous engagement with grassroots innovators, a certain reality becomes visible. Each innovation is at a different stage. Some innovators have an idea but are unable to begin. Some have started working but cannot move forward. Others have built something and want to test it. A few are ready to expand but do not have the means to do so.

Innovation takes time. It involves repeated effort, materials, testing, and learning. At each stage, some support is required. In many cases, the requirement is not very large, yet it becomes difficult to arrange. Without such support at the right time, many ideas remain where they are. Not because they lack value, but because they do not get the opportunity to evolve.

How It Took Shape

The idea of PSP did not begin as a plan. During one of the Chinna Shodha Yatras, a participant asked if there was any fund within Palle Srujana to support innovators. That question stayed. It led to a thought that Palle Srujana could present the needs of innovators, and potential contributors could decide for themselves whether they wanted to contribute. The decision to support or not would rest entirely with them.

There was no intention to create a formal structure. The process would remain simple and direct. Those who wished to support could do so. The support would go directly to the innovator. Repayments, if they came back, would return to the same people directly from the innovator. Palle Srujana would only be ethically and morally responsible for proper use of the fund support, with no involvement in the transactions.

At that very moment, the initiative was named Palle Srujana Pennidhi. Within a month, a few volunteers worked on shaping this idea into practice. In those early instances, four innovators received support at the same time. One of them did not repay and could not be reached again. The others began repayment within the agreed period. This did not stop the effort. From the beginning, one understanding has been clear. There is risk. The decision to support is taken with that awareness. If the money comes back, it continues the cycle. If it does not, it is accepted as something given for a larger purpose.

A Way of Supporting

When an innovator needs support, a Volunteer Lead takes the responsibility to understand the situation closely. They spend time with the innovator, analyse the problem, the idea, the stage of the work, and what the support would enable. They also discuss a possible way of repayment. Once they are convinced, they share the case with others. People respond in their own ways. Some take time to decide. Some respond immediately. Contributors are free to talk to or visit the innovator.

Where It Makes a Difference

The stories within Pennidhi are varied, but they share a common thread. A small amount of money, arriving at the right moment, makes the difference between an idea that moves forward and one that stays still.

Velle Srinivas and the Kisan Remote

Velle Srinivas developed a device he called the Kisan Remote, which allows farmers to operate their water pump motors from a distance of one and a half to two kilometres. Traditionally, farmers had to walk to their fields each time they needed to switch a motor on or off. This was not only inconvenient but often dangerous, as electrical fluctuations had caused injuries and losses. The remote has two buttons, one to switch the motor on and one to switch it off, with a short delay built in to allow for a stable power supply before the motor starts.

He learned about Palle Srujana and reached out to Brigadier Ganesham to share his innovation and his vision of making it accessible to more farmers. He decided to manufacture one hundred Kisan Remotes as a pilot. The estimated production cost was one lakh thirty-five thousand rupees. Within a week, volunteers contributed the full amount through Pennidhi. Srinivas procured the materials, manufactured the remotes, and sold them at a minimal profit, keeping the device affordable for farmers.

He began repaying the loan in monthly installments and cleared it within nine months. Encouraged by the response, he wanted to scale up production by buying materials in bulk. Volunteers raised two and a half lakh rupees within ten days. This loan too was interest-free, with a flexible repayment plan. Despite having approached banks and government schemes, he had been denied support because the funding criteria did not

cover the materials he needed. He expressed deep gratitude to the volunteers for believing in his innovation.



Mupparapu Raju and the Order He Almost Could Not Keep

Mupparapu Raju developed a device equipped with a Light Dependent Resistor sensor that automatically switches streetlights on and off based on the presence of light. He received a government order to install this system in multiple villages, with payment to come after installation. To fulfil the order, he needed money upfront to produce the devices at scale. He went to banks with the government order in hand. They turned him away. He did not have specified collateral that met their requirements.

Through Palle Srujana Pennidhi, volunteers came together to support him with two lakh rupees. Raju completed the work and repaid the entire amount within twenty months, without any written agreement or formal monitoring. His system has since reached a few hundred villages in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The same person the banks had decided was not creditworthy went on to honour every commitment, because the only thing that had changed was who chose to trust him.



Nagabushanam and the First Month

Nagabushanam, who worked on a mobile bakery setup, needed about one and a half lakh rupees as working capital. When his case was shared, the amount came together within a day. He had committed to repay in monthly installments. One day before completing the first month, he called the Volunteer Lead and asked whom he should repay. There is a certain sense of responsibility that emerges in such moments. When support is extended without conditions, it is often met with the same quality of response/care in how it is used and how it is returned.

Trust and Responsibility

One of the most consistent observations within Pennidhi has been the way innovators respond to the support they receive. Even in the absence of written agreements or formal conditions, most innovators make the effort to repay within the agreed time. This stands in contrast to common assumptions about repayment, particularly when it comes to individuals working with limited means.

When support comes from individuals who have chosen to trust, it is received with a sense of care. Innovators are aware that the money has not come from an institution but from people who have placed confidence in them. This awareness shapes how the support is used and how repayment is approached. It is less about obligation in a formal sense and more about honouring that trust in a way that feels right to them.

What It Makes Possible

Over time, PSP has been able to support innovators at different points in their journeys. More than 90 lakh rupees has been extended so far, reaching over twenty five innovators. For some, it creates the possibility to test an idea for the first time in real conditions. For others, it helps complete a stage of work that has remained pending due to lack of resources. In certain cases, it allows the innovation to reach a larger group of people.

Pennidhi is not only about financial support. It reflects a certain way of understanding the efforts of grassroots innovators. Many of them invest their own time, energy, and limited resources over long periods, often without external support or recognition. Their work emerges from persistence rather than from structured backing. In this context, what is contributed through Pennidhi is often a small part of a much larger effort already made by the innovator. Palle Srujana Pennidhi continues in the same spirit in which it began: simple, open, and guided by individual choices rather than a defined structure. It is, in the truest sense, a holy treasure not just a resource - shared with trust, intent, and collective goodwill.

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Gnan Shodh: Understanding Villages as Living Systems

An immersive process of deep listening and observation that helps participants truly understand a village before acting within it

At a Glance

▸ Close to 100 participants have interacted with thousands of individuals across multiple Gnan Shodhs	▸ Assesses the village as a whole - income and expenditure, imports and exports, unutilised resources, and the aspirations of youth and women
▸ Participants engage with every occupation - farmers, shepherds, weavers, teachers, artisans - building a layered picture of village life	▸ One institution (KG Reddy College) integrated Gnan Shodh into its academic structure after witnessing students bond and ragging reduce
▸ Shifts the entry point for development work. From assumption to understanding, from intervention to listening	▸ Produces genuine two way learning. Findings are shared back with communities, deepening understanding on both sides

Gnan Shodh emerged from a simple question: what does it mean to truly understand a village? The first instance was not designed as a formal programme. A group of students from BITS Pilani wanted to spend their time doing something meaningful. Many of them were from Andhra Pradesh. Prof Anil Gupta connected them to Palle Srujana. What followed was not an assignment but an experience. They spent time in villages, speaking with people, observing, and trying to understand how life unfolds. When they returned, something had changed in the way they spoke about villages. Over time, this came to be known as Gnan Shodh.

An Approach That Evolved

Each Gnan Shodh has taken shape differently. Sometimes it has been initiated at the request of village leaders who wanted to understand their own communities better. At other times, organisations that wished to work in villages approached Palle Srujana, unsure of where to begin. In some cases, individuals living away from their villages wanted to contribute but did not know how. Across all these contexts, one principle remained unchanged: before doing anything, take time to understand.

Understanding the Village as a Whole

Gnan Shodh is, at its core, a village assessment. But the word assessment here carries none of its formal or clinical weight. It does not happen through questionnaires or structured surveys. It happens through conversation, observation, and the willingness to stay long enough for the picture to become clear.

Participants look at the village as a living system. They try to understand what comes into the village and what goes out, its imports and exports. What raw materials arrive from outside? What produce, craft, or knowledge leaves? This simple question, when asked carefully, reveals how self-reliant a village is and where its dependencies lie.

They explore the income and expenditure of the village as a whole, not just of individual households, but of the community. What does the village earn collectively? What does it spend on? Where does money flow in, and where does it drain away? These conversations with farmers, traders, teachers, and elders begin to reveal an economic picture that rarely appears in any official record.

Unutilised and underutilised resources receive particular attention. A pond that has silted over. A common land that was once productive. A craft that the younger generation has not taken up. Skills that exist in the village but have found no market. These are not failures. They are possibilities, and Gnan Shodh treats them as such.

The aspirations of the village also come into focus. What do the youth want? What do women wish for themselves and their families? Where do young people go when they leave, and why? What would make them stay? These questions do not always have comfortable answers, but they are asked with genuine curiosity rather than a development agenda.

Across all of this runs the thread of occupation. Participants interact with farmers, shepherds, weavers, potters, teachers, anganwadi workers, whoever is present and willing to speak. Each occupation carries its own knowledge, its own challenges, and its own relationship with the land and the community. No single conversation is complete in itself, but together they build a layered understanding that no report could capture.



Gradually, a picture begins to emerge. Not as data, but as a lived reality. Across Gnan Shodhs, close to one hundred participants have interacted with thousands of individuals. These are not structured interviews. They are conversations. Each conversation adds a layer of understanding. Sometimes it confirms what was observed earlier. Sometimes it brings a completely new perspective. There is no better way to understand a village than to speak with the people who live in it.

Working Together

In one instance, students from KG Reddy College participated in Gnan Shodh. Initially, they preferred to stay within their own groups. It was not allowed. Each group contained a mix of seniors and juniors. Within a day, something shifted. They began to interact differently. Conversations opened up. They worked together towards a shared purpose. Human bonding developed among them. Later back in college, they reflected that ragging had reduced significantly. The experience had allowed them to understand each other beyond roles and hierarchies. The institution went on to integrate Gnan Shodh into its academic structure.

From Understanding to Action

Sometimes a Gnan Shodh does not begin as a Gnan Shodh. The story of West Gogulapalli started earlier, during a Chinna Shodha Yatra in the same area. As the team walked through the region, they came upon salt farms and the farmers who made salt. They stopped, as yatris do, and listened.

Lakshman and the Salt Pans

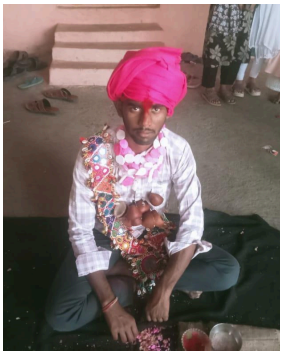
One young salt farmer, Lakshman, took the time to explain the full process. The yatris learned how salt is made, how long it takes, how the yield depends on weather and season. They also learned something less visible. The salt farmers were illegally tapping electricity because they had no other way to run their motors. It was not dishonesty but necessity. The grid had not reached them, and the work could not wait. Lakshman spoke about this plainly, without embarrassment, and the yatris heard it the same way.

That conversation stayed. It raised a question that a yatra alone could not answer. What would it take to understand this livelihood more fully? To see whether there was any way to help? The decision was made to return, this time for a Gnan Shodh specifically focused on the salt farming community of West Gogulapalli in Nellore.

What followed was the kind of immersion that Gnan Shodh is built for. Participants walked through the salt pans, watching the process unfold step by step. They spent time with the farmers, understanding the economics behind it. The costs involved, the dependence on weather, the uncertainties of yield, the way prices were determined. The role of middlemen became visible, shaping how the final product moved through the market.

During this visit, the group included Patan Saida, a grassroots innovator known for developing a mastless windmill. The thought was worth exploring: could wind energy offer an alternative to the electric motors the farmers were running illegally? An attempt was made to set up the system. It did not work as expected. But the outcome did not diminish the value of the effort. What stood out was something more fundamental. People from different backgrounds had come together, not with a predefined plan, but with a willingness to understand and respond. In that process, Gnan Shodh became more than a space for observation. It became a space where understanding, reflection, and the possibility of action all met in one place.






Learning Both Ways

Gnan Shodh is not a one sided process. There have been instances where participants have shared their observations back with the community. In Kolanpaka, what emerged from days of conversations and observation was brought together and presented to the villagers, not as conclusions, but as points for collective reflection. Villagers engaged with what was being shared, agreeing, questioning, and adding their own perspectives. In that process, understanding deepened on both sides.

Participants often return with a deeper sense of empathy. They begin to place people at the centre of their thinking. They become more aware of context. Many carry this into their work. Some institutions adopt the approach. Others continue engaging with villages. The impact continues quietly.

> *While cities are built by humans, villages are created by the Creator. This is the core of Palle Srujana's approach.*



Capturing Children's Creativity

Engaging school children across rural areas to surface their ideas, observations, and creative responses to everyday problems

At a Glance	
▸ 10,000+ children's ideas documented and shared with SRISTI and NIF Ignite for further development	▸ Reveals depth of rural children's sensitivity. Observations on affordability, environment, and social practice that adults often miss
▸ Positions children as national knowledge assets rather than passive learners, a shift with lasting implications	▸ Connects children's imagination with grassroots innovation, creating early bridges between young minds and real world problem solving



Children possess immense creativity, yet their potential remains largely untapped when it comes to contributing to nation building. Organisations like Palle Srujana, Honey Bee Network, SRISTI, and NIF strongly believe that children's ideas can make a meaningful impact when nurtured in the right way. To capture and foster this creativity, interactions with school children in their schools become an important part of the process.

Engaging with students has become an integral part of the CSYs. Schools are also encouraged to bring children to the Innovation Diffusion Centre at Palle Srujana, where they can familiarise themselves with grassroots innovations on display. Volunteers conduct presentations to introduce them to simple, cost effective solutions developed by grassroots innovators, creating a space where children can observe and relate.



After gaining exposure to these innovations and understanding how they address challenges in society, children are invited to identify problems in their own surroundings and suggest possible solutions. Every interaction reveals the depth of sensitivity and ingenuity that children carry.

What Children Notice

During one of the Chinna Shodha Yatras in Vijayanagaram district, volunteers conducted a similar activity with primary school students. One student from class five wrote about elderly people in her village who do not wear spectacles even when their eyesight is weak because they cannot afford them. She suggested that an electric bulb can be cut into half and the wider portion filled with water. When text is viewed through it, the alphabets appear enlarged, almost as if they are floating. She imagined that elders in her village could use this to read.

The idea is not seen only in terms of whether it can be practically used. What stands out is the observation and sensitivity behind it. It reflects an ability to notice a problem, relate to it, and respond with care. This sense of awareness at a young age becomes as important as the idea itself.

From Ideas to Possibilities

Over the years, more than 10,000 such ideas from schoolchildren have been documented and shared with organisations like SRISTI and the NIF Ignite program for recognition and

further development. These efforts create a pathway for young minds to engage with real world challenges and see their ideas as meaningful contributions. Twenty six crore children are in Indian schools at any given time. These many creative human beings cannot be discounted as immature minds. They have creativity and they live in every geography of the nation. They are to be seriously considered as national knowledge assets.

Innovation Diffusion Centre: Bringing Innovations Closer to People

A physical demonstration space where farmers, students, and visitors can see, touch, and experience grassroots innovations firsthand

At a Glance

▸ Visitors from 40+ countries have engaged with grassroots innovations at the IDC. It has become a 'Place to see' in Hyderabad	▸ Physical demonstration proved critical. Seeing and touching innovations shifted understanding in ways explanations alone could not
▸ Became an anchor for bringing Hyderabad visiting farmers into direct contact with agricultural innovations	▸ Sparked curiosity in students and professionals alike, expanding the circle of people who take grassroots creativity seriously

The Innovation Diffusion Centre (IDC) emerged from a simple but important gap. While Palle Srujana had identified and documented a large number of grassroots innovations, there was very little to physically show to those who visited. Conversations and videos could only go so far. Without seeing and experiencing the innovations directly, it was difficult for visitors to fully understand their value.

This changed when Palle Srujana moved into its office space at 122 Vayupuri. The open space available there made it possible to display a few innovations. Brigadier Ganesham suggested to the National Innovation Foundation that a small set of innovations, along with basic support, could be provided to create a demonstration space. Volunteers would manage it, and people from different backgrounds could visit, see, and interact with innovations.

After about two years, support came through. Palle Srujana received funding along with a few innovations such as a coconut tree climber, an energy efficient water cooler, and a bicycle based water pumping system. Additional innovations were either procured or contributed by innovators themselves. This marked the beginning of the Innovation Diffusion Centre.

Learning Through Seeing and Doing

The purpose of IDC was not only to display innovations, but to create a space where people could engage with them directly. Farmers, students, officials, media, and anyone interested were invited to visit. As people moved from one innovation to another, seeing how each problem had been solved in a simple and practical way, their understanding began to shift. Physical demonstration made a significant difference. Within a short span of time, visitors who were unfamiliar with grassroots innovations began to appreciate their relevance. Seeing, touching, and trying the innovations helped them connect in ways that explanations alone could not achieve. The pole climber was tried by many visitors, who quickly understood the ease with which it allows a person to ascend an electrical cement pole.

One of the key intentions behind IDC was to reach farmers who visited Hyderabad. By bringing them to the centre, they could be introduced to innovations related to cultivation, weeding, irrigation, and other agricultural practices. Farmers interacted with the tools, discussed among themselves, and reflected on what could be useful in their own contexts.

Reaching Young Minds and Wider Audiences

The IDC gradually became a space where students could experience grassroots creativity. Hundreds of school children visited in batches from different institutions. When innovations were demonstrated and the stories behind them were shared, it sparked curiosity. They began to see that problems around them could be addressed in simple and practical ways. Over time, the IDC attracted people from varied backgrounds. Scientists, rural development professionals, civil servants, and industry leaders visited the centre.

Delegates and representatives from nearly forty countries, including those from Asia and Africa, also visited the centre. For many of them, it became an entry point to understand grassroots innovations through direct experience. Despite having a limited number of innovations on display, the impact of these demonstrations remained strong. Visitors often left with a deeper appreciation of the ingenuity present in rural communities. More than a display space, the IDC has functioned as a point of interaction where people begin to see, question, and appreciate the value of grassroots knowledge.



Creative Minds: Exploring the Path to Commercialisation

A market linkage initiative connecting grassroots innovations to real buyers, navigating the gap between rural ingenuity and formal systems

At a Glance	
▸ Enabled business across various innovations through direct and indirect market linkages	▸ 160+ innovations commercialised, and Rs 35+ crore worth of rural innovations sold through its efforts
▸ Navigated a fundamental mismatch. Formal market systems are not designed for local, need based, customisable rural innovations	▸ Redefined its role from manufacturer to bridge, connecting innovators to opportunities while letting them retain ownership

The idea of Creative Minds emerged from a practical challenge. While Palle Srujana was able to identify and document grassroots innovations, taking them to the market remained difficult. This phase of exploration was shaped by Brigadier Ganesham's own experience after retirement. During his time as a Director at Bharat Dynamics Limited for about three years, he worked closely with industry and had access to a wide network of industrialists, including MSMEs and established manufacturers.

With this background, it appeared that connecting grassroots innovations to the market would be straightforward. As new innovations were identified, he reached out to industrialists individually, assuming there would be interest in manufacturing and scaling these products. However, the response was unexpected. Despite sustained efforts for nearly one and a half years, no one came forward.

To understand this hesitation, a meeting was organised with members of a manufacturers association, where about twenty industrialists participated. Their response brought clarity. They explained that grassroots innovations did not fit within conventional business models. Demand was scattered across geographies, often in small numbers. Each product required customisation. Affordability was to be sustained for scaling up sales. Selling in rural markets required direct interaction and demonstration. There were expectations of subsidies that manufacturers were not equipped to manage. This marked an important realization. The challenge was not the lack of innovation, but the mismatch between grassroots realities and formal market systems.

A Shift Towards Market Linkages

In 2009, Creative Minds was formally registered with a revised focus. The intention was to support the sale of grassroots innovations and create market linkages. One of the early successes came with Brahmam's gas operated iron box. Around 100 units were sold through Creative Minds. This demonstrated that there was potential, but it also revealed operational challenges. Products were made but did not always find buyers, leading to blocked capital. Eventually the activity slowed down and remained inactive for a few years.

In 2011, a new opportunity emerged with Narasimha's hyacinth removal machine. After the innovation was documented and shared across platforms, an order was received from the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation to clean a lake in Hyderabad. The work was taken up through Creative Minds. The innovator brought his technology, and the lake cleaning was completed. While these projects demonstrated practical application, they also highlighted financial limitations. These experiences became part of an ongoing learning process.

Redefining the Role

As both Palle Srujana and Creative Minds continued to evolve, it became clear that the need for a platform like Creative Minds remained strong, but its role had to be redefined. Subhash Chander, an MBA graduate with a village background, stepped forward to take responsibility. Having already worked with Creative Minds on implementation and coordination, he brought continuity and understanding to the effort.

The approach shifted. Instead of focusing on manufacturing, Creative Minds began to position itself as a bridge between innovators and the market. Innovators continued to handle production, while Creative Minds focused on connecting them to opportunities. Subhash worked closely with innovators, guiding them on packaging, transportation, and presentation. Innovations were taken to exhibitions, demonstrated to potential users, and explained in ways that made them accessible. This was not conventional marketing. It was based on direct interaction, demonstration, and trust. Over time, Creative Minds played a direct or indirect role in enabling business worth nearly twenty crore rupees across various innovations.

An Ongoing Question

Despite these efforts, the larger challenge of commercialising grassroots innovations remains. The experience showed that existing business models and marketing strategies from formal systems do not easily apply in this context. Grassroots innovations are often local, need based, and require adaptation to specific situations. This makes standardised production and large scale distribution difficult. Creative Minds continues to exist as an evolving response to this challenge. Its journey reflects both possibility and limitation. The search for ways to strengthen this last mile continues.

Exhibitions: Where Innovations Meet People

Participation in over 500 exhibitions across farmer gatherings, institutions, and public platforms, taking innovations to where people already are

At a Glance

- 500+ exhibitions across farmer gatherings, institutions, villages, towns, and public platforms, each a live encounter between innovation and need
- First farmer exhibition held as early as 2007 in Karampudi village
- One exhibition led to 40 on the spot weeder orders. The demand continued through farmer networks for two years after
- Challenges the assumption that innovation requires formal education.

Exhibitions became an important part of Palle Srujana's journey not through deliberate planning, but as a natural extension of its work. As more grassroots innovations took shape, there arose a need to take them beyond their immediate surroundings into spaces where people could see, question, and relate to them. Over time, Palle Srujana has participated in a wide range of exhibitions across contexts, farmer gatherings, government initiatives, and educational institutions. While each space differs, all of them create opportunities for innovations to travel, interact, and find relevance beyond where they originate.

When Innovators Meet Their Users

In exhibitions centred around farmers and rural communities, the interaction is direct and grounded. Innovators explain how their tools function, and farmers relate what they see to their own conditions, asking questions based on real needs. Some of these exchanges lead to improvements, while others help innovators understand how their work fits into different contexts. Within a short span, innovators are able to reach hundreds, sometimes thousands, of people, something that would otherwise take months. Tools are also sold, and demand begins to grow.

The Student Who Carried It Home

A meaningful example of how such connections unfold occurred during Agri Tech 2023, held on December 3 and 4 at the Agricultural College in Guntur. The exhibition was organised by the Agricultural College and brought together farmers, enthusiasts, officials, and students. Schools from across the region brought their students to witness the innovations on display. Among the visitors were students from Bhashyam School in Vijayawada.

At the exhibition, a student named Avula Hrushikesh noticed a remote starter for motors developed by innovator Velle Srinivas. The moment he saw it, his thoughts went to his father, Avula Srinivas Rao, who walked a long distance every day just to switch on the

motor in their field. The device offered a simple solution to a daily effort that had long gone unaddressed.

As soon as he returned home, Hrushikesh told his father about the exhibition. He said that every day his father walked all that distance to the motor and back, and that Palle Srujana had found a solution to this. An innovator had developed a remote starter. With it, the motor could be switched on directly from the field, without the long walk. He shared the phone number he had collected from the Palle Srujana stall.

The father, moved that his son had noticed and thought about his difficulty, called the number right away. Palle Srujana volunteer Upputella Krishna answered and, understanding the need, arranged a conference call with the innovator, Velle Srinivas. After listening to the details, the farmer decided to purchase the device without hesitation.

What this incident reveals is something that goes beyond the transaction. A school student, introduced to Palle Srujana through an exhibition, instinctively became a bridge between an innovation and someone who needed it. Without training, without being asked, he carried the knowledge home and connected it to a real difficulty in his father's daily life. It reflects how innovations reach people most effectively, not always through systems, but through the quiet attentiveness of individuals who care. When school students are introduced to grassroots innovations, they too begin to act as volunteers. This voluntary approach, once again, proved to be the most meaningful way of taking innovations to people.





Forty Orders in Two Days

At Lam Guntur in 2020, grassroots innovator Mahipal Chary brought his weeder to the exhibition. Farmers gathered around, tried it in their hands, and asked questions. By the end of the two days, forty orders had come in on the spot. That was not the end of it. Word moved through farmer networks the way it does when something actually works. In the two years that followed, Mahipal Chary sold nearly two hundred weeders across the Guntur district. Most of that demand traced back to those first conversations at the exhibition stall.







When Institutions Become Meeting Grounds

Exhibitions hosted by engineering and management institutions create a different kind of engagement. Students and faculty begin to see that innovation does not always arise from complexity, but from a clear understanding of real problems. The common perception that innovation depends primarily on formal education is quietly challenged when they encounter grassroots innovators. Creative Minds and Palle Srujana participate in exhibitions across institutions such as NIF, CCMB, CBIT, IIIT Basara, IIT Hyderabad, NIT Warangal, ICRISAT, NABARD, and platforms like TEDx.

Participating in exhibitions requires steady effort. Innovations are transported, arranged, demonstrated, and taken back. Volunteers support every stage, from logistics to engaging with visitors. Creative Minds plays a key role in coordinating these processes and supporting innovators throughout. Palle Srujana has participated in more than 500 exhibitions over time. Each one differs in its setting and scale, yet all create spaces where people and innovations come together. Alongside visibility, these platforms contribute to livelihoods, with sales amounting to several lakhs each year.



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Wednesday Weekly Webinars: When Conversations Continued Without Movement

A weekly online gathering born during the pandemic, creating a live space for innovators, farmers, and volunteers to connect across distances

At a Glance	
▸ 100 sessions held between 2020 and 2022. Innovators, farmers, academics, and volunteers, all connecting through a single meeting link	▸ Reached hundreds of farmers directly. Many more accessed sessions through recordings shared online
▸ Proved that physical presence, while powerful, is not the only way knowledge can travel between people	▸ Helped innovators and farmers grow comfortable with digital tools, a shift that outlasted the pandemic

Much of Palle Srujana's work of connecting innovations to people has depended on physical presence, on being in the same place, at the same time, with the same tools in hand. Exhibitions, yatras, and demonstrations made this possible. But this way of engaging came to an abrupt halt when the pandemic arrived.

When Movement Stopped

During the pandemic, this came to a halt. Travel was restricted and gatherings were not possible. The spaces where interactions usually happened disappeared almost overnight. However, life in villages did not stop. Farmers continued their work, and the need for solutions remained as urgent as ever. At the same time, a small shift had become visible. With education moving online, many households had access to better mobile phones. This created a new possibility. If people could not meet physically, could conversations still continue?

An Idea Took Shape

Out of this need, Wednesday Weekly Webinars began. The idea was simple: create a consistent space where innovators, farmers, and others could come together. Wednesday evenings became that space. What began as an experiment gradually took shape as a regular practice, with the first webinar held on October 14, 2020.

Each session brought together a diverse group. A Palle Srujana volunteer set the context, and a guest speaker from educational institutions, the IT industry, or related fields shared their perspective. Grassroots innovators then presented their work using simple photos or videos. Farmers responded with their own challenges, questions emerged, and conversations followed. In that one hour, a different kind of meeting space took shape, where knowledge moved back and forth rather than in one direction.

Over the course of the pandemic, 100 such webinars were organised. Hundreds of farmers participated in these sessions, and many more accessed the conversations later through recordings shared online. Across these webinars, hundreds of guests including academicians, professionals, volunteers, and representatives from NGOs and farmer producer organisations contributed to the discussions. Mr Subhash Chander was the key person in the conduct of these webinars.

Learning to Adapt

This shift was not without challenges. For many innovators, speaking through a phone screen was unfamiliar. Demonstrating innovations without physical presence required adjustment. Issues like connectivity and power interruptions affected continuity. Yet the effort continued. Volunteers adapted, innovators learned, and participants became more comfortable. Timings shifted based on feedback from farmers, moving to the evening to allow better participation. A single meeting link was used consistently, and sessions were recorded for those who could not attend.

What It Made Possible

The impact went beyond numbers. These webinars ensured that communication did not stop during a time of disruption. They helped people become more comfortable with digital

tools and created a space where farmers could directly interact with innovators, discuss their needs, and explore solutions. For innovators, this became a way to reach people without cost and across distances. For farmers, it became a space to discover solutions and connect with others facing similar challenges. Wednesday Weekly Webinars began as a response to disruption, but what sustained them was a willingness to adapt and a commitment to continue sharing knowledge. Humans got connected virtually in the quest of knowledge.

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Rural Internships: Learning to Recognise Knowledge

Internship experiences that place students inside villages, encouraging them to observe and learn rather than assess or intervene

At a Glance

▸ 1,000+ students from TISS, IITs, NITs, and other institutions immersed through rural internships	▸ First rural internship in 2010, students from IIT Kharagpur. The practice has grown steadily since
▸ Internships are not assessments of villages. They are experiences of unlearning, observation, and genuine curiosity	▸ One internship (IIIT Basara and Mallesham) led to a software upgrade that was shared free with every existing buyer of the machine

Palle Srujana's rural internships create a space for students to engage with villages as places of learning. The focus is not on studying or assessing the village, but on how students observe, listen, and understand what they come across. Over the years, scientists, govt officers, and students from institutions such as ASCI, TISS, BITS, NIT, IIT, NAARM, IIIT, MANAGE and several engineering and management colleges have taken part in these internships. In some cases, this engagement has also been recognised as part of their academic learning.

Each internship begins with a day of orientation. During this time, interns are introduced to Palle Srujana, grassroots innovations, and village contexts. They are encouraged to understand how creativity emerges in villages on its own, often from need and experience. More importantly, this orientation prepares interns to enter the village with a certain intent. They are encouraged to look for knowledge, including recognising practices, observations, and ways of doing things that may not be formally taught but exist within the community.

Learning Through Immersion

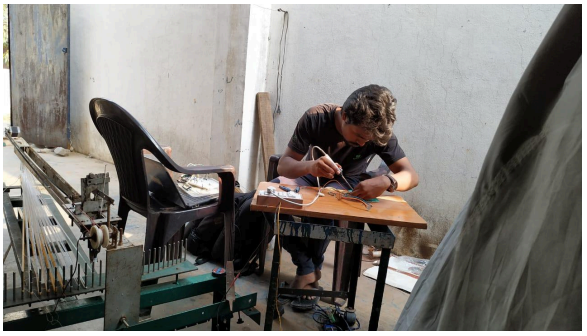
In offline internships, interns spend a few days in the village. Learning happens through interaction and observation. Often, what they learn comes from simple moments. Seeing uncultivated food in the surroundings, or understanding how certain food grows again on

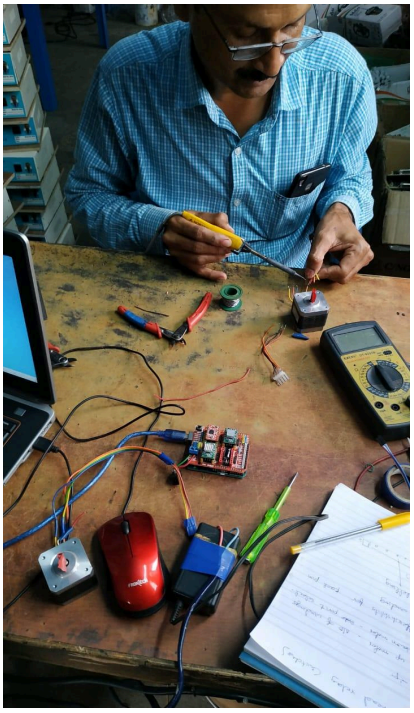
its own, becomes a form of knowledge. Interns are encouraged to look at the strengths of the village. The experience is not directed towards identifying problems alone, but towards recognising what solutions already exist.

Two Students and Mallesham's Machine

Two interns from IIIT Basara worked closely with Mallesham on his asu machine, which helps prepare thread for weaving - a traditionally time consuming and physically demanding task for women in weaving families. They redesigned the control in a way that allowed the weaver to make changes directly, without depending on an external programmer.

Mallesham received this with openness. Then he did something that no one had asked him to do. He reached out to every person who had earlier bought one of his machines and upgraded them with the improvement, at no additional cost. He took the effort to ensure that the benefit did not remain with a few but reached the entire community of users. These are the outcomes of collaboration.






This is where volunteerism and samvedana become visible in practice. Not as ideas, but as actions that move quietly from one person to another. Institutions approached Palle Srujana. Palle Srujana connected students to the innovator. The students offered their knowledge with sincerity. The innovator received it with openness and extended it further with responsibility. Maybe goodness finds out goodness for synergy.

> *Maybe goodness finds out goodness for synergy.*

Online Internships

This format began during the COVID period, when MVSR Engineering College reached out to Palle Srujana with a question on whether students could be meaningfully engaged despite the constraints. Over a thousand students were interned online effectively. In this format, interns are encouraged to observe and document creativity in their own surroundings. They also take part in reading sessions and discussions. Volunteers continue to guide students through regular online interactions and feedback.

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Recognition and Validation

Securing patents, awards, and formal acknowledgements that make visible the value/significance of grassroots innovations within the systems that matter

Once grassroots innovations are documented, they can be submitted for various awards that recognise their value. Over time, it becomes evident that many of these innovations are often undervalued or dismissed simply because they emerge from informal systems. Awards, recognition, and patents serve as forms of validation that the formal system understands. They signal that the innovation and the knowledge behind it are worthy of acknowledgement. They also help create an identity for grassroots innovators within their own communities, where their contributions begin to be seen and appreciated by the formal system.

At Palle Srujana, efforts continue to apply for such recognitions on behalf of innovators, sometimes with the support of organisations like NIF and GIAN. These organisations also assist in securing patents, ensuring that the knowledge is credited to the original innovator and remains with them. Over time, grassroots innovators associated with Palle Srujana have received recognition across multiple platforms.

3 Padma Shri Awards	**14** Presidential Awards	**12** International Awards
83 Innovations Patented	**2** NABARD Awards	**2** Samsung Innovation Quotient Awards
6 NIRD Awards	**1** INK Fellowship (LA)	**2** National Entrepreneurship Awards
2 Innovators Hall of Fame	**1** Aarohan Award (Infosys Foundation)	**1** Honorary Doctorate
2 Amazing Indian Awards	**4** For 'We Serve India' Awards	**15** Raitu Nestam Awards
1 Sakshi Excellence Award	**2** Hall of Fame Awards	**1** Mahindra Samruddhi Award

These recognitions do not stand alone. They strengthen the confidence of innovators, encourage them to continue, and open doors that their work alone might not have reached. In this way, formal acknowledgement becomes part of a larger journey, one that begins in a village workshop and travels, quietly, much further.

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Palle Srujana at a Glance

800+ Grassroots technologies identified and documented	**160+** Innovations commercialised
2,000+ Villages visited on foot (3,000+ km, 54 CSYs)	**Rs 35+ Cr** Worth of rural innovations sold
1 Lakh+ College students connected with grassroots creativity	**1 Lakh+** Farmer families benefited
300 Rural youth employed in innovation enterprises	**1,000+** Students immersed through rural internships
1,000+	**10,000+**

Traditional herbal treatments documented	Children's ideas documented
40+ Countries collaborated with	**19+** Years of volunteer driven publication

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The Larger Journey

What Palle Srujana represents, taken together, is not easy to measure in conventional terms. There are no dashboards for the shift in how a young professional begins to see a village after walking its paths for three days. There are no metrics for the moment an elderly farmer, featured in a magazine for the first time, is invited to speak at a school on Republic Day. There are no reports that capture the texture of a conversation at two in the morning during a yatra, when strangers, walking in the dark, begin to understand something about themselves.

And yet the impact is real. It lives in the nearly thousand people who have walked the Chinna Shodha Yatras and carried some of that experience back into their institutions and families. It lives in the more than 90 lakh rupees extended through Pennidhi, almost entirely repaid, to people whom formal systems had already decided were not creditworthy. It lives in the 100th edition of a magazine that was started by three volunteers who had never worked in publishing, funded only by subscriptions, and distributed to mandal offices across two states.

It lives in the asu machine weaver who received a software upgrade from two students, and then passed it on, free of cost, to every person who had ever bought one of his machines. It lives in Ashok, who was seventeen when he took a hand weeder made for four hundred and fifty rupees to Kolkata and stood among IIT teams and won. It lives in the postmaster who, instead of returning a magazine with an incomplete address, reads it, and then tracks down the subscriber himself.

These are not anecdotes. They are the actual substance of what Palle Srujana has built. Not through strategy or scale, but through sincerity. Not by correcting rural India, but by listening to it.

The movement rests on a few simple convictions. That knowledge is not the exclusive property of institutions. That creativity does not require a degree or a laboratory. That trust, extended genuinely, is almost always honoured. That when people are treated as sources of wisdom rather than subjects of development, or as only consumers, something in the relationship changes. And that change, quiet and unannounced, tends to last, based on knowledge sharing and mutual respect.Brigadier Ganesham once said that he wanted to

make himself zero before entering a village. That single idea has shaped everything that followed. A movement built not on what it wanted to give, but on what it was willing to receive.

> *A movement built not on what it wanted to give, but on what it was willing to receive.*

Palle Srujana continues. Village by village, walk by walk, story by story.

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A Note on Methodology

The work described in this document may appear to flow naturally, as if good intentions and willing volunteers were all that was needed. In practice, each initiative described here rests on a carefully evolved methodology: ways of entering villages, ways of listening, ways of honouring knowledge without distorting it, ways of running a yatra so that participants genuinely learn, ways of presenting innovations so that farmers can make real decisions, ways of supporting innovators financially without creating dependency.

This methodology was not borrowed from a textbook. It was developed through Palle Srujana's own experience, through mistakes, corrections, and the gradual accumulation of understanding about what works in this particular kind of work. Though the spirit of the work is voluntary, its implementation is professional. The methodology is a living document, shaped and refined by every cohort of volunteers and practitioners who have been part of this journey.

For organisations and practitioners who wish to go deeper, who are interested not just in the story but in the practice, a separate methodology document is available. It covers the operational and conceptual framework behind Palle Srujana's key activities, and is intended as a practical companion for those who wish to adapt this work to their own contexts.

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Frequently Asked Questions

This section is for civil society organisations, NGOs, and practitioners who want to understand Palle Srujana more deeply, whether to collaborate, learn from it, or explore whether something like it might work in their own context. The answers come not from Palle Srujana as an institution, but from the volunteers themselves. Rather than

organisational claims, we wanted you to hear directly from those who have lived this work. Think of it as a conversation with the people you would meet if you walked through the door.

About the Model

Q1. If Palle Srujana does not take funds, how does it sustain itself?

Response 1 :

రాముడికి సైన్యం లేదని రావణ సంహారం ఆగిందా? వానరసేన సహాయం చేసింది. యుద్ధంలో లక్ష్మణుడి ప్రాణం పోయిందా? సంజీవని వచ్చింది. సంకల్పం ఉంటే మార్గం ఉంటుంది!

Translation: Did Rama's battle stop because he had no army? The Vanara Sena came forward. Did Lakshmana's life end on the battlefield? The Sanjivani arrived. When the purpose is true, the means find their way.

Vivek, Head of Innovation @ KASE , age 24. Volunteering with Palle Srujana since 2024

Response 2 :

There is no specific fund or pool of collected expenses. Most of the work is carried out by volunteers of their own accord. Expenses for yatras, events, and occasions are either shared among the participants or sponsored directly by someone. To serve a cause or to connect with a community, why would money be the starting point? Some costs are borne by the founders. The rest are shared among those involved.

Naga Mohan, Founder, Extra Mile. Volunteering with Palle Srujana since 2021

Response 3 :

Pallesrujana does social work in a true sense. Charity was always done by the rich and privileged. Pallesrujana breaks that barrier and gives an opportunity to anyone to become a philanthropist, where each individual contributes something more valuable than money - their time. There are no individuals as beneficiaries, but society as a whole benefits. Transaction happens through knowledge, not money. The knowledge emerges from the grassroots and spreads. Pallesrujana acts as a means to spread the grassroots wisdom.

M Omkarnath, Educator and Social Entrepreneur. Associated with Palle Srujana for more than 10 years.

Q2. Who do volunteers report to if there is no hierarchy?

Response 1 :

వానరసేనలో ఎవరు పెద్ద కోతి, ఎవరు చిన్న కోతి? అందరూ రాముని సంకల్పం కోసమే!

Translation: In the Vanara Sena, who was the senior monkey and who was the junior? All of them served the same purpose.

Vivek, Head of Innovation @ KASE , age 24. Volunteering with Palle Srujana since 2024

Response 2 :

What is the meaning of a volunteer? Someone who works entirely by their own will. No one asked, no one forced. We saw the work of Palle Srujana. We were inspired. The urge to be part of it came from within. Fire. Fire. Fire. We joined in whatever way we could, with more commitment than we give to our own personal lives. There is only the sharing of work here. Why would hierarchy exist?

Naga Mohan, Founder, Extra Mile. Volunteering with Palle Srujana since 2021

Response 3 :

One of the volunteers takes up a lead position just to coordinate and update the core team. It is again a voluntary action, and no criteria is required unless the particular task needs specific expertise.

Ashok Gali, Farmer; earlier career in Finance and Operations. Age 41. Volunteer with Palle Srujana for two years

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Q3. How does work get done without fixed roles or deadlines?

Response 1 :

వానరసేనలో ఎవరు దళపతి, ఎవరు రథసారథి? ఎవరికీ ఏది వచ్చో, ఏది అవసరమో, అవి చేసేస్తారు.

Translation: In the Vanara Sena, no one was assigned the role of commander or charioteer. Each did what they were capable of, and what was needed.

Vivek, Head of Innovation @ KASE , age 24. Volunteering with Palle Srujana since 2024

Response 2 :

Work, projects, and needs are shared in common groups or discussions. You are invited to take up something you feel capable of, or something that interests you. If nothing calls to you, you simply step back. There are no fixed roles beyond what you choose to take on. Brigadier Ganesham, as the overall guide, keeps an eye on how things are moving, who might be well placed for a task, and ensures there is always a plan in reserve.

Naga Mohan, Founder, Extra Mile. Volunteering with Palle Srujana since 2021

Response 3 :

People are self-accountable and connected to Brig directly. There are no standards set, but excellence is expected. People are committed and put their best efforts. There is no reward for doing well or consequences for underperforming. Expectations are based on the commitment given by a volunteer.

M Omkarnath, Educator and Social Entrepreneur. Associated with Palle Srujana for more than 10 years.

Q4. Who can be a volunteer at Palle Srujana? Is there any criteria?

Response 1 :

పెద్ద హనుమంతుడి నుంచి చిన్న ఉడత వరకు, అందరి సహాయంతోనే రామసేతు నిర్మించబడింది. ఎవరి వంతు సహాయం వారిది.మంచి చేద్దాం అని సంకల్పం,నేర్చుకోవాలి అనే తపన ఉంటే చాలు.

Translation: From the mighty Hanuman to the smallest squirrel, the Ram Setu was built through everyone's contribution each offering what they could. What truly matters is the resolve to do good and the eagerness to learn.

Vivek, Head of Innovation @ KASE , age 24. Volunteering with Palle Srujana since 2024

Response 2 :

To understand Pallesrujana, the only way is to attend at least one Chinna Shodh Yatra or a Gnan Shodh. It makes people experience the values we stand by. It teaches people to be grounded and respect people irrespective of their identity. Realise that the wisdom is in common people and the nature around. Once that happens, one becomes a Pallesrujana volunteer for life.

M Omkarnath, Educator and Social Entrepreneur. Associated with Palle Srujana for more than 10 years.

Credibility and Impact

Q5. How do you ensure the quality of what you document and publish?

Response 1 :

The volunteer is responsible for quality. A final check is done by the core team.

Ashok Gali, Farmer; earlier career in Finance and Operations. Age 41. Volunteer with Palle Srujana for two years

Response 2 :

Palle Srujana goes to the people in urban and rural areas and talks to people of all walks of life, all ages, men and women, to get firsthand information on their skill and their innovation. The innovation or service is physically inspected. Guidance and further improvement aspects are also shared. The person's achievements are recorded and then published. Wherever necessary, the individual is helped to file patents for their inventions. Thus every act documented has authenticity.

KVRS Murthy, Retired Scientist and Senior Deputy Director, CSIR-IICT Hyderabad. Honorary Director of Research, Institute of Scientific Research on Vedas, Hyderabad. Age 79. Associated with Palle Srujana for 16 years.

Q6. How do you know the innovations you scout actually work?

Response 1 :

I personally visited the innovator, saw the innovation, and observed how it worked. I asked questions until I had thoroughly understood its mechanics, the thinking behind it, and the problem it was built to solve. It is less like a review and more like a thorough interrogation: what it is, what it is not, and why.

Naga Mohan, Founder, Extra Mile. Volunteering with Palle Srujana since 2021

Response 2 :

The volunteer who does the scouting actually visits the innovator's place and stays for a day or two, with expenses borne by themselves, and checks on how it is solving the problem the innovator identified. This is then discussed with the core team before any next step is taken.

Ashok Gali, Farmer; earlier career in Finance and Operations. Age 41. Volunteer with Palle Srujana for two years

Response 3 :

We do not validate an innovation. People who use it validate it. An innovation comes out of someone's pain, and usually, many more people in the community face the same issue. If the innovation reduces their pain, then the innovation is valid. We only document it and spread the knowledge so that it reaches more people going through the same pain.

M Omkarnath, Educator and Social Entrepreneur. Associated with Palle Srujana for more than 10 years.

Q7. How is Palle Srujana different from other organisations working in rural development?

Response 1 :

The main thing other organisations miss is Samvedana. The work at Palle Srujana began with grassroots innovations, and each of those innovations grew from someone's pain. Every solution was made to reduce that pain. That is Samvedana. There are no employees here, no boss, no hierarchy of any kind. Everyone is equal. You work when you can, on what calls to you. And the Chinna Shodha Yatra, the practice of walking through villages and speaking with people from all walks of life, is something few other organisations have attempted. The philosophy, the knowledge, and the impact are best understood by participating in the work directly.

Naga Mohan, Founder, Extra Mile. Volunteering with Palle Srujana since 2021

Response 2 :

Most organisations I know have a hierarchy and depend on funding, public or private. They are also more concerned with media exposure, which is not seen here.

Ashok Gali, Farmer; earlier career in Finance and Operations. Age 41. Volunteer with Palle Srujana for two years

Response 3:

Any social organisation defines a problem and provides its apparent solutions. Pallesrujana is the only organisation that finds problems and solutions from the ground. Pallesrujana does not solve anyone's pain, but acknowledges it.

M Omkarnath, Educator and Social Entrepreneur. Associated with Palle Srujana for more than 10 years.

Collaboration

Q8. How can our organisation work with Palle Srujana?

Response 1 :

Visit pallesrujana.org and speak to any volunteer, or directly to Founder-President Brigadier Ganesham. You can help identify grassroots innovations in your region, many of which are related to agriculture and rural livelihoods. The website carries a list of documented innovations. You can also help promote markets for these innovations, connecting them with farmers and others who stand to benefit. Anything that improves village productivity and strengthens local solutions is aligned with what Palle Srujana is trying to do.

Naga Mohan, Founder, Extra Mile. Volunteering with Palle Srujana since 2021

Response 2 :

Let us make it simple. Go through the website www.pallesrujana.org. Then call me (9866001678) and seek clarifications. Plan to join our once in three months Chinna Shodha yatra. Spend 2-3 days with us at Palle Srujana interacting with innovators and volunteers. Then get going in the area of interest to your organization. Working with Palle Srujana is only to understand our philosophy. Thereafter, you may evolve in your context and become an example to others.

Brigadier (Retd.) Ganesham, Founder & President, Palle Srujana

About the Future

Q9. What would it take to scale this model to other states?

Response 1 :

Yojak has a plan to achieve this task. We opine that influencing few inclined volunteers from other states with Palle Srujana philosophy through Chinna Shodha yatras, Gnan shodhs, interaction with Palle Srujana team at their location for a few days are preferred.

Further hand holding them in organising activities in their respective areas, review and refine methods developed by them and study the outcomes with a view to improve the approach adopted by them.

Brigadier (Retd.) Ganesham, Founder & President, Palle Srujana

Volunteerism and Learning

Q10. What keeps volunteers coming back? What stops people from drifting away over time?

Response 1 :

People have their own personal experiences through Shodh yatra or Gnan shodh. They form expectations, and those who get the true value of it stay longer. Those who need structures to operate may struggle initially, but eventually build self-accountability without the need for it.

M Omkarnath, Educator and Social Entrepreneur. Associated with Palle Srujana for more than 10 years.

Response 2 :

Over the years, Palle Srujana learnt to live with volunteerism. Respect all, equity to all, collaboration always, accountability absent, task assignment never done, no money talk, claps, acknowledgements, certificates not assured. Consistency in treating volunteers as above over a reasonable period is a very important appealing aspect for volunteers to return to Palle Srujana again and again. It is a human-to-human contact, humane attitude always, to build 'Aatmeeyata' between Palle Srujana and volunteers and also among the volunteers.

Three days of Chinna Shodha yatra makes volunteers comprehend the value system of Palle Srujana, the interaction philosophy and to serve people with pure collaboration. They also realise that rewards of such collaboration are not in materialistic gains but in the form of intangibles such as contentment, mutual respect, blessings from unknown, care and affection from villagers etc.,. Some always drift away when their core values and life's aspirations do not match with that of Palle Srujana. This percentage, we found to be less and less as we moved along in our journey.

Brigadier (Retd.) Ganesham, Founder & President, Palle Srujana

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Q11. How does someone learn to scout? Is there training or does it come from experience?

Response 1 :

Scouting grassroots innovations need a humane approach. It is about finding the creativity in unknown people. One needs to get connected to them, win their acceptance and trust. Then follows a communication which is transparent and in sharing mode. Preferably use the language villagers are good at. Do not show any signs of selfishness or self-interest in his innovation. It should be in all respects purely a knowledge sharing activity for the benefit of the Innovator and the society. Scouting skills need to be tailor made to the innovator's stature, background and ability to communicate.

Scouts need good training to reduce the learning period. It should include field work and feedback. Further, on the job training refines the scout's skills. Only 'on the job learning' will require longer time to reach a reasonable scouting skill. Palle Srujana and National Innovation Foundation are the two agencies which can organise training for building Scouting skills.